

Methodist Lay Preachers' Network Newsletter

JULY 2023

Tēnā koutou katoa, malo e lelei, talofa lava, ni sa bula vinaka, greetings from the Methodist Lay Preachers Network to all Lay Preachers in congregations with a Methodist component.

Yes, so soon after our June Newsletter, here is one in July! 😊 We felt it was important to give a short **report on our recent zoom meeting** and outline some suggested **changes to the training and accreditation process**. So within this newsletter please find:

- a brief report on our June zoom meeting
- suggested changes to the training and accreditation process

And also contributions from John Thornley:

- Recent Writings from Rev. Dr Keith Rowe
- Where to start with using hymns from *Alleluia Aotearoa*

On 19 June, 17 people from across the country representing most geographical (English-speaking) Synods joined in a zoom meeting for Lay Preachers. Here is a **brief report**:

After introductions, we identified **Synod Network Reps** at present as:

Northland – Rosalie Gwilliam

Auckland - TBA

Manukau - TBA

Waikato-Waiariki - Ngaire Southon

Lower North Island - Rosalie Sugrue and Maureen Calhaem

Nelson-Marlborough-West Coast - TBA

Central South Island - Margaret Woodcock

Otago-Southland - TBA

Sinoti Samoa - TBA

Vahefonua Tonga - TBA

Wasewase - TBA

Year Book list of Accredited Lay Preachers

It would be helpful to the present Convenor if reps for each Synod could take the names and details of Lay Preachers in their own Synod, as they are more likely to know the people involved. The reps will then send the gathered information to the Network Convenor to compile for the Year Book. Where there is no rep, Viv will continue the conversation with Synod secretaries to enable this to happen.

Ideally, we would like two more younger (than us!) Lay Preachers from other parts of the country to join as Network Co-convenors – we need to do some succession planning.

Training, Accreditation and on-going Education

Some suggestions have come from members at the zoom meeting and have been discussed further between Ngaire and Viv.

They suggest some significant changes. Here is an outline for further discussion around the Network and communicated to the cultural Synods.

The process for training is currently set out in Information Leaflet #153, which can be found at <https://www.methodist.org.nz/assets/DownloadsFiles/Information-leaflet-No-153-revised-May-2022.pdf>

Here is what we are suggesting for accreditation in English-speaking Parishes:

- Someone seeking accreditation as a Lay Preacher will start by discussing it with his/her Parish Superintendent, Enabler, or Synod Superintendent if there is no presbyter – no real change.
- There will be two levels of training – further discussion is needed on how we name these.

1. For ministry in that person's own Parish or Congregation.

The study involved would be over a minimum of 2 years through a programme such as Lead Worship. Ideally this would be offered in the Parish, but it could be in the Synod or even at national level by zoom.

2. For ministry recognised nationally through accreditation.

The study would be over a minimum of 3 years through a year of Lead Worship and 3 papers through Trinity College; these could however be studied concurrently over 2 years. Courses of study through other institutions (eg Laidlaw College, Otago University) may be approved after consultation with Trinity College.

3. We would seek to remove the clause in the Law Book which allows those of "mature years" who have been preaching for more than 5 years to be accredited without further study. This was never intended to be a permanent means to accreditation.

- Every trainee would have a mentor, who could be a Presbyter or experienced Lay Preacher.
- The last step for acceptance for leading worship locally or for national accreditation would be through the evaluated service and interview process, as at present. The interviewing team could recommend further study or training; their report would be sent to the Parish Presbyter for final endorsement by the Parish Council and also to the Synod Executive. The Synod is responsible for following up any recommendations for further study or training. The Synod Secretary retains a copy of the report.
- Those trained for local ministry would receive a certificate from the Parish; those who are nationally accredited would receive a certificate through the NZLPA, as at present.
- It is envisaged that the Lead Worship programme will continue to be updated and also could be used by those who have completed their training at any level as one way to undertake on-going education.
- We strongly advocate on-going training through one or more of these methods:
 - regular reading in preparation for services (visit the Kinder library in Auckland and Hewitson library in Dunedin for on-line resources and postal services),
 - attending training sessions and workshops and lectures offered through any of the partner churches (Anglican, Christian Churches of New Zealand, Methodist, Presbyterian),
 - taking papers or attending lectures at theological colleges (Trinity College, St John's, Knox, Auckland and Otago universities)
 - or registering for on-line courses from recognised religious institutions here or overseas.

We value your feedback and continuing discussion before we take these suggestions to Trinity College and Mission Resourcing for further discussion.

So we are scheduling **two options for zoom meetings** where this can happen:

Monday 24 July 7.00 to 8.30pm - Lay Preacher training and accreditation discussion (1)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84148562725?pwd=bi8rZUFZcWpvZTBCamQwTnJZUIZ2UT09>

Meeting ID: 841 4856 2725

Passcode: 498199

and/or

Sunday 30 July 3.00 to 4.30pm - Lay Preacher training and accreditation discussion (2)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81088940993?pwd=eHZlZlVud0tqaWMwSW1hUll1MWd1dz09>

Meeting ID: 810 8894 0993

Passcode: 985986

You may not be able to join us for either of these but Ngaire and Viv still invite your feedback before this is circulated for wider consultation. Our contact details are at the end of this letter.

Recent Writings from Rev. Dr Keith Rowe

Keith Rowe is former President of the New Zealand Methodist Church and Principal of Trinity College (earlier name, and now part of the St Johns centre of theological education in Auckland). John Thornley has recently made contact with Keith, who accepted an invitation to give the keynote talk at the AGM of the Palmerston North Interfaith Group. It was well received.

Arising from this, and after further contacts with Keith, John can send online copies of two talks. Just make email contact with John at: johngill@inspire.net.nz and the article(s) will come by return email!

‘Next Steps in the Interfaith Journey’ – Ancient Wisdom in a New Context (Address given at the May 2023 AGM of the Palmerston North Interfaith Group.)

‘Living in God-Spirit in a Divided and Troubled World’ (article first published in *Word and Worship* Winter 2022) – Reflections on the Pentecostal season in the church calendar.

In addition, Keith Rowe is author of *Wounded World and Broken Church – Sermons towards Healing*, 200 pages, published by Coventry Press, Melbourne 2022. Online orders to Pleroma Books, Otane (\$39.99). A book for lay people seeking a faith relevant for the 21st century. Each chapter treats a Bible lectionary reading, exploring its meaning in Jesus’ times and for church people today.

I highly recommend this book!

John Thornley

Fifteen Easily Singable Hymns from *Alleluia Aotearoa*

This list is compiled by John Thornley, Palmerston North, in response to a comment from a local church leader: 'We'd like to use more NZ hymns, starting with *Alleluia Aotearoa*. But where do we start with a total of 163 hymns?' Here are some suggestions:

8. **Brother, sister, let me serve you**

22. **Come into the streets with me** - Palm Sunday

23(ii). **Come now, Lord Jesus** - Christmas carol

36. **Every day**, a gem from Shirley Murray/Colin Gibson

59. **He came singing love** - Colin Gibson's folk hymn

64. **How is Jesus present?** good one to have when children/grandchildren are present in the service

72. **In this familiar place** – hymn to begin a service

85. **Let justice roll down**

87. **Lift high the cross** – Easter hymn

94(i). **Loving Spirit** - goes best to the David Dell tune

98. **Te Harinui** – NZ's carol for the landing of Samuel Marsden on a marae for first Christmas service on our land

127. **Take my gifts** – another gem from Murray/Gibson

137. **The kingdom is within you.** A rhythm'n'blues hymn

143. **Touch the earth lightly** – a Green hymn

146. **We are an Easter people**

Order *Alleluia Aotearoa* from Philip Garside Publishing

at books@pgpl.co.nz (Also has extensive website <https://pgpl.co.nz/>)

We recognise and affirm the hard work done in the cultural Synods (Sinoti Samoa, Vahefonua Tonga and Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma) to train and accredit Lay Preachers to acceptable standards. Te Taha Māori also have robust processes to train Kaikarakia. We welcome their comments and contributions as we seek to resource and communicate with those involved in leading worship among and beyond the English-speaking congregations.

Romans 10:14-15 in *The Message* paraphrase reads:

¹⁴ But how can people call for help if they don't know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven't heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them? ¹⁵ And how is anyone going to tell them, unless someone is sent to do it? That's why Scripture exclaims, A sight to take your breath away! Grand processions of people telling all the good things of God!"

Viv Whimster
vjwhimster@gmail.com
07 578 6056

Ngairie Southon
ngairie@southon.net
07 578 7119